FIRST COMICS
OCT. $1.00
NO. 7
$1.25 CANADA
WARP
THE GUNFIGHTER FROM HELL!
BRYNNER

FIRST™ NOTES

DIRTY WORDS

For the past seven years now, Howard Chaykin and I have been playing a little game. You see, we both share several rather uncommon interests: radio and television booth announcers, swing music, 1930s illustrators .... I have to admit I've learned a lot from Chaykin — he's turned me on to a lot of neat stuff.

So when we initially put First Comics together — long before we announced our presence to the real world — Howard was one of the very few people I took into my confidence. I figured he was safe: Howard had been working on a long-standing commitment to graphic novels and to paperback covers and magazine illustration, and for all purposes had left the traditional comics world behind.

So you can imagine how surprised I was when, oh about fifteen months ago, I received a call from Chaykin that started off something like this:

"That's what we're in business for, Howie." (He hates being called Howie.)

"No, I mean *my* comic book, you dummy!" (I hate being called dummy.)

"Well," making a lame attempt at playing hard-to-get, "What's it about?"

"Oh, the usual. Women and violence. And patriotism."

That's not a non-sequitor. Chaykin's probably the most patriotic person I know. Not the usual "Love it or Leave It" nonsense that serves to divide instead of unite — and is therefore *not* patriotic. Howard's patriotism comes from pride — and from great hopes for America. The United States isn't *the* land of opportunity. It isn't *the* land of freedom. Other nations have comparable levels of opportunity and freedom.

America is the land of *hope*. And that's a wonderful thing to have.

So amid all the violence and women, amidst all the style we have come to associate with Howard's work, you're going to find a great deal of patriotism in **American Flagg,** which premieres this month. Thoughtful, hopeful patriotism.

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

Mike Gold, Managing Editor
Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
Bruce Patterson,
Production Coordinator

Richard Felber,
Business Manager
Kathy Kotsivas, Office Manager

WARP™ Vol. 1, No. 7, October 1983. Published by FIRST COMICS, INC., Mike Gold, President; Rick Obadiah, Secretary; Richard Felber, Treasurer; Kenneth F. Levin and Ralph C. Musicant, Directors. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 1014 Davis Street, Evanston, IL 60201. Published monthly, including Warp specials. Copyright © 1983 First Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. Price: $1.00 in the U.S., $1.25 in Canada. Subscription rates for twelve issues: $11.00 in the U.S., $13.75 in Canada, and $27.00 foreign rate. All payments must be in U.S. funds. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, without satiric content are intended or should be inferred. Warp, Lord Cumulus, Chaos — Prince of Madness, Lugulbanda, Sargon — Mistress of War, Valaria, Symax, Xander, The Faceless Ones, and all prominent characters featured in this issue are trademarks of First Comics, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. by World Color Press. Engraved by Post Graphics. In case of nuclear attack, read very quickly. Second-class postage pending at Evanston, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to First Comics, Inc., 1014 Davis St., Evanston, IL 60201.

A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

SQUID EDITION

ON TO DETROIT!

Faster than anybody thought possible, The Attic Theater, 525 Lafayette Street in Detroit, mounted their production of the Warp trilogy. Part 1, "My Battlefield, My Body" will be running through July 9th; part 2, "Unleased, Unchained" will be running from July 15 to August 27; part 3, "To Die ... Alive" will be running from August 31 through September 10. After that, all three plays will be running in repertory.

(If you miss any chapter, don't despair — there's a full recap in the program book and a flashback on stage at the opening of chapters two and three.)

William J. Norris will be directing — Bill originated the parts of both Symax and Dagon in the original Chicago and New York productions, and in the 1979 Chicago revival. Bill also directed Warp in Minneapolis several years ago.

Much of the original Warp material — including Rick Paul's sets, Cookie Gluck's costumes and Lee Ditkowski's special effects — are being used in the Detroit productions.

Tickets run from $7.00 to $12.00 per show. Call 313-963-7750 for more information.

If you're a fan of the **Warp** comics, or of comics in general, you're in for a real surprise. If you're a theater buff ... hey, you're in for one hell of a surprise!

Tell 'em First Comics sent you.

THE CONVENTION RAG

For the next few months, we'll be keeping you informed of major conventions at which sundry First Comics people will be showing up. Please keep in mind these words are being written in March and read in June, so plans can change.

During the next month:

June 25-26, at the Woodlawn Holiday Inn in Charlotte, N.C.: Mike Grell and Howard Chaykin.

July 4th weekend, at the New York Sheraton Hotel in New York City: Howard Chaykin, Joe Staton, and publisher Rick Obadiah.

July 9 and 10, at the Franklin Plaza Hotel in Philadelphia: Joe Staton, Howard Chaykin (boy — he's sure a party animal, ain't he?), and yours truly, Mike Gold.

We'll give you the next chapter next month.

And, honest, we're very much looking forward to seeing you at any and all of these shows!

— Mike Gold

ON SALE NOW

American Flagg #1: Now it all begins! Meet Reuben Flagg — the hero for his times ... and his times just happens to be fifty years in the future, when the entire world is on the auction block and at wits end! The creation of writer/artist **Howard Chaykin** — this book has to be seen to be believed!

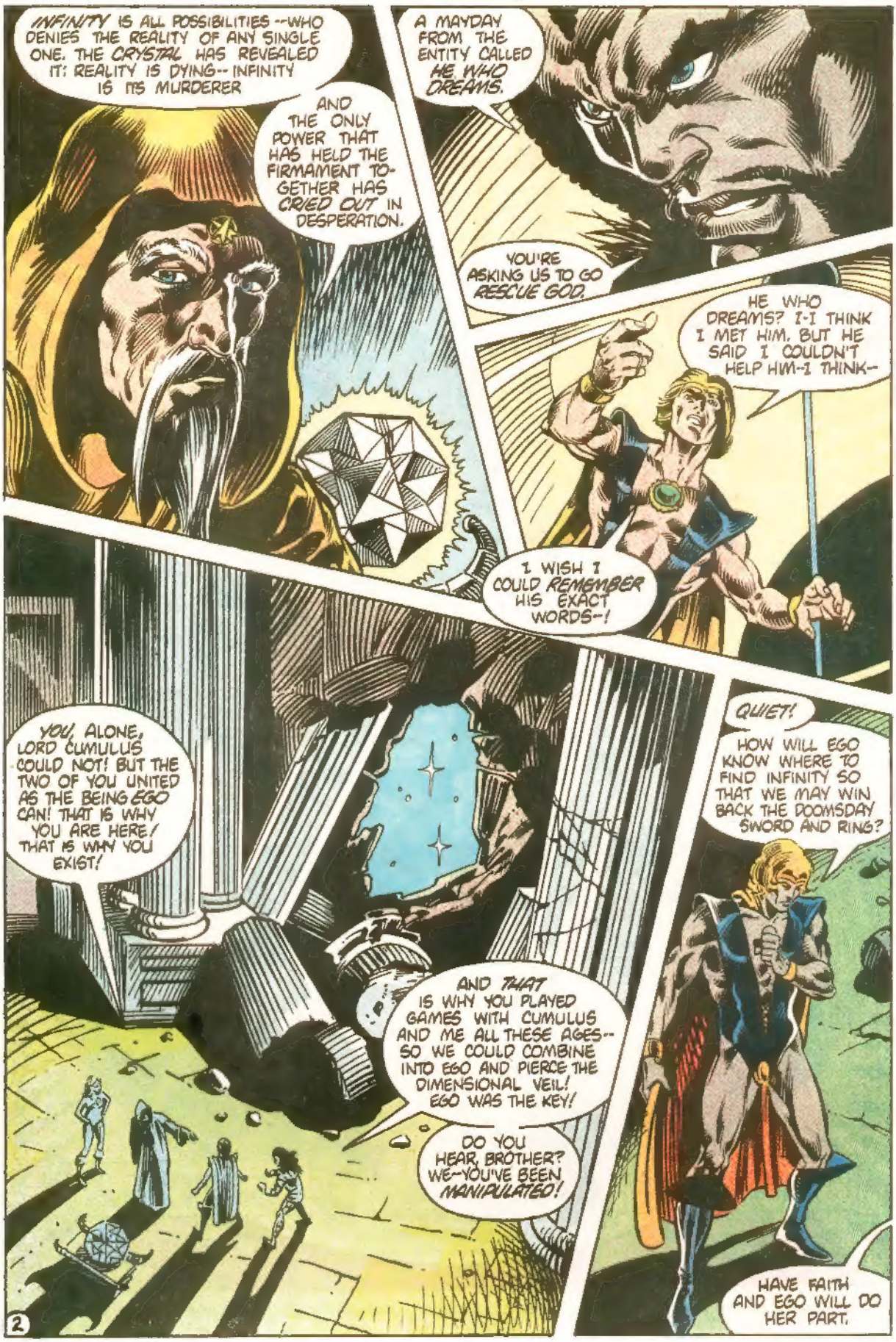
Jon Sable, Freelance #5: "Killzone — The Origin of Jon Sable, Part 3." There's not that much to say without giving it away — if you're a fan of high adventure, of edge-of-the-seat drama, of great comic books — or if you're merely among **Mike Grell's** zillions of fans — this one's for you!

ALSO FIRST IN JUNE

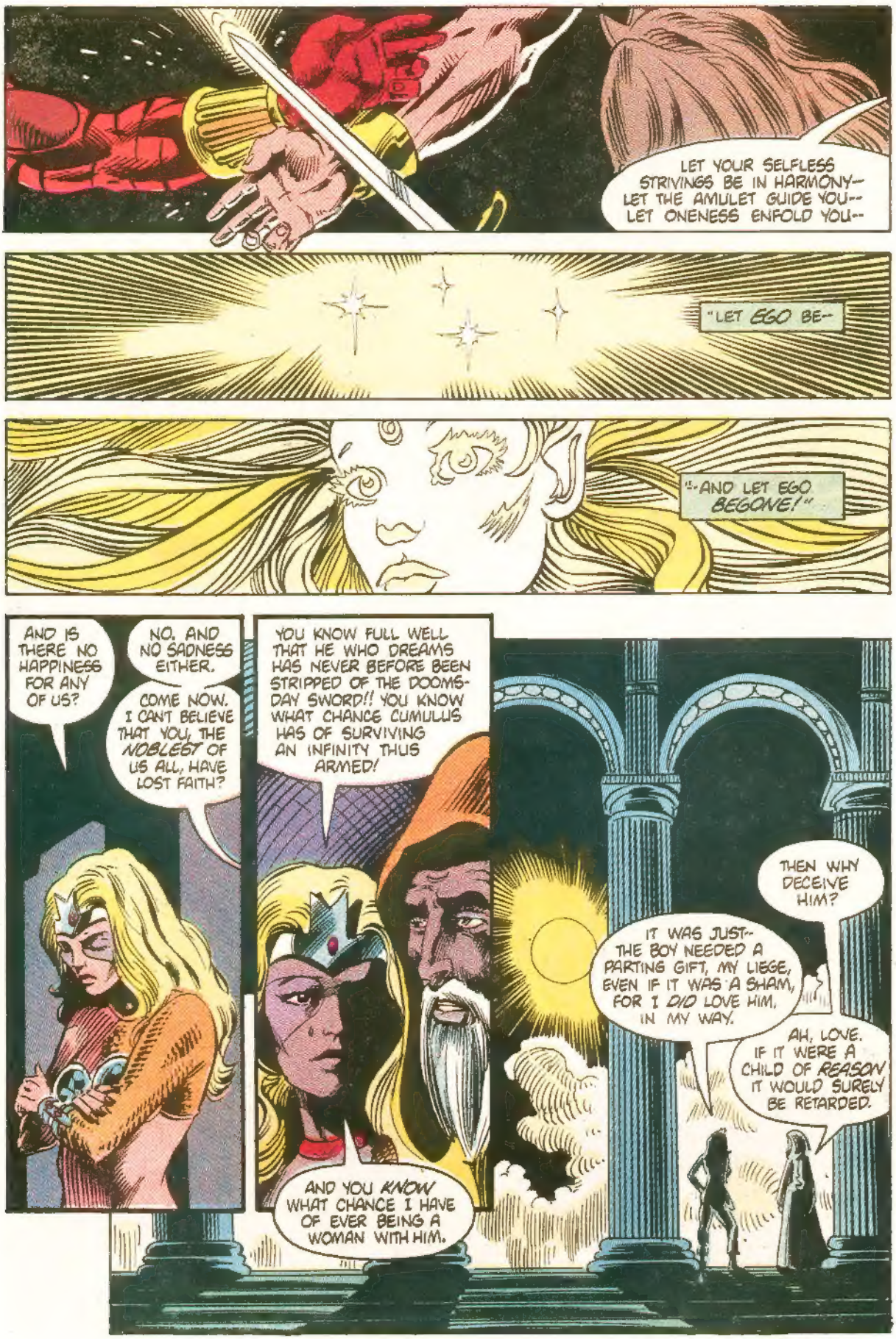
E-Man #7: Our hero faces the righteous wrath of Gantry Babbit — and the all-consuming menace of The Feeder! **Marty Pasko, Joe Staton** and **Rick Burchett** outdo themselves in page after page of high-energy action! Plus — a visit from **Steve Rude** and **Mike Baron's Nexus!**

Starslayer #9: How do you convince a horde of slaves you're there to free them — if they think you just destroyed the planet Earth? That's Torin MacQuillion's problem as he tries to stop the "Flotilla," a 28 page thriller by **John Ostrander, Lenin Delsol** and **Mike Gustovich.**

FRANK BRUNNER ADAPTATION/PENCILS • PETER GILLIS SCRIPT • MIKE GUSTOVICH INKS • KEN BRUZENAK LETTERS • JANICE COHEN COLORS • MIKE GOLD EDITOR


INFINITY IS ALL POSSIBILITIES --WHO DENIES THE REALITY OF ANY SINGLE ONE. THE CRYSTAL HAS REVEALED IT: REALITY IS DYING-- INFINITY IS ITS MURDERER
AND THE ONLY POWER THAT HAS HELD THE FIRMAMENT TOGETHER HAS CRIED OUT IN DESPERATION.
A MAYDAY FROM THE ENTITY CALLED HE WHO DREAMS.
YOU'RE ASKING US TO GO RESCUE GOD.
HE WHO DREAMS? I-I THINK I MET HIM. BUT HE SAID I COULDN'T HELP HIM--I THINK--
I WISH I COULD REMEMBER HIS EXACT WORDS--!
YOU, ALONE, LORD CUMULUS COULD NOT! BUT THE TWO OF YOU UNITED AS THE BEING EGO CAN! THAT IS WHY YOU ARE HERE! THAT IS WHY YOU EXIST!
AND THAT IS WHY YOU PLAYED GAMES WITH CUMULUS AND ME ALL THESE AGES-- SO WE COULD COMBINE INTO EGO AND PIERCE THE DIMENSIONAL VEIL! EGO WAS THE KEY!
DO YOU HEAR, BROTHER? WE--YOU'VE BEEN MANIPULATED!
QUIET!
HOW WILL EGO KNOW WHERE TO FIND INFINITY SO THAT WE MAY WIN BACK THE DOOMSDAY SWORD AND RING?
HAVE FAITH AND EGO WILL DO HER PART.
2

THEN--I MUST GO TO MY FATE LOCKED IN A FUSION IN WHICH I LOSE MY IDENTITY! BUT LORD CUMULUS KNOWS HIS DUTY!
DONT SEEK TO IMPLY THAT PRINCE CHAOS NEGLECTS HIS, KIDDO!
THE SPAN OF EGO'S EXISTENCE IS THE FRAILEST OF ALL MIRACLES. SHE REQUIRES, ABOVE ALL, HARMONY BETWEEN HER COMPONENT IDENTITIES.
SARGON, I KNOW I'M JUST A BLUNDERING HOTHEAD, BUT WHAT I FEEL FOR YOU IS--IS--
MORE THAN UNDERSTOOD, AND MORE THAN RETURNED. NOW GO: FOR IF YOU FAIL, NOT EVEN LOVE WILL SURVIVE.
I'LL BE BACK, MISTRESS OF WAR.
WE MUST HURRY. MY LORDS, PLACE YOUR WRISTS TOGETHER.
SARGON, YOUR BLADE.
WHEN YOU RETURN, MY LORD, THE MISTRESS OF WAR SHALL LAY ASIDE HER DAGGER AND HER OATHS AND LEARN--GENTLER THINGS.
3


LET YOUR SELFLESS STRIVINGS BE IN HARMONY-- LET THE AMULET GUIDE YOU-- LET ONENESS ENFOLD YOU--
"LET EGO BE--
"--AND LET EGO BEGONE!"
AND IS THERE NO HAPPINESS FOR ANY OF US?
NO. AND NO SADNESS EITHER.
COME NOW. I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU, THE NOBLEST OF US ALL, HAVE LOST FAITH?
YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT HE WHO DREAMS HAS NEVER BEFORE BEEN STRIPPED OF THE DOOMSDAY SWORD!! YOU KNOW WHAT CHANCE CUMULUS HAS OF SURVIVING AN INFINITY THUS ARMED!
AND YOU KNOW WHAT CHANCE I HAVE OF EVER BEING A WOMAN WITH HIM.
THEN WHY DECEIVE HIM?
IT WAS JUST-- THE BOY NEEDED A PARTING GIFT, MY LIEGE, EVEN IF IT WAS A SHAM, FOR I DID LOVE HIM, IN MY WAY.
AH, LOVE. IF IT WERE A CHILD OF REASON IT WOULD SURELY BE RETARDED.

AND ELSEWHERE...
SUCH REMARKABLE INSIGHT-- COMFORTING TO KNOW I'M STUCK WITH A FIRST CLASS INTELLECT.
HEY, I'M NOT WE--UH, WE'RE NOT EGO ANY-MORE!
SO-- WHERE ARE WE? THE LAND IS FLAT, AND EVENLY RULED, LIKE A GAME BOARD.
WONDER WHAT THE NATIONAL SPORT IS?
I ISSUE THE DEATH-CHALLENGE!
CRACK THEIR BONES AND DRINK THEIR BLOOD!
WAR GAMES, I EXPECT, LORD CUMULUS.
5

WELL, THEN, HAVE AT-YOU!?

HIS *HEAD* JUST CAME OFF!?

NO SUCH PROBLEM HERE, BROTHER--*HELP ME!*

HERE'S THE THING'S SWORD-- HE WON'T BE NEEDING IT!

CHAOS, THESE THINGS ARE COMPLETELY *HOLLOW!*

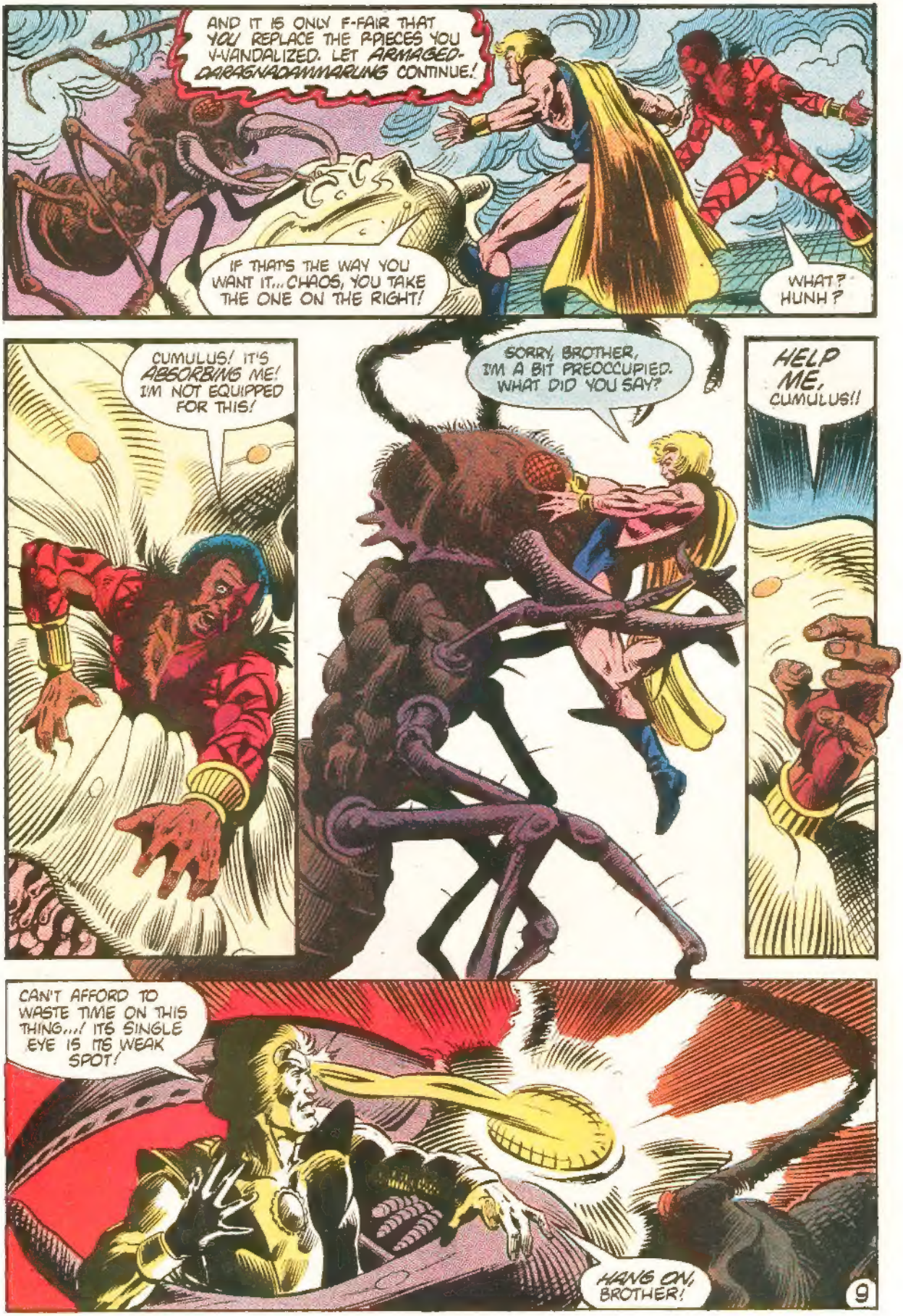
THAT DOESN'T MAKE THIS ANY *LESS* SATISFYING!

WELL, THAT WAS SHORT WORK!

YES, BUT-- WHAT'S *GOING ON* HERE?

YOU *B-BROKE* THEM! YOU BROKE THEM *B-BOTH!*

A UNIQUE P-PAIR! YOU SMASHED MY F-FAVORITE ONES!
AND WE'LL SMASH WHATEVER WE HAVE TO UNTIL YOU HAND OVER THE GOODS!
GOODS! W-WHAT GOODS!
GOD'S GOODS, INFINITY! WE'VE COME FOR THE DOOMSDAY SWORD!
ME? INFINITY? HOO-HOO! YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING FOR THE SWORD HERE, BUT FOR YOUR LIVES--AND MY AMUSEMENT!
YOUR NEW HOME IS THE SEVENTH LEVEL, DOMAIN OF D-DAGON; SON TO NO FATHER, FATHER TO NO SON!
WELL, AT LEAST HE'S TOLD US EGO DIDN'T FAIL--THE SWORD'S HERE, AND--CHAOS?
THERE NOW! Y-Y-YOU ARE NOW THE P-PUPPETS OF DAGON, SUPREME C-COMMANDER OF THE ETERNAL B-BATTLE! YOU HAVE THE HONOR OF PARTICIPATING IN SOMETHING I C-CALL--ARMAGEDDARAGNA-DAMMERLING!
LOSING CONTROL! MUST TEAR FREE!
FIGHT IT, CHAOS! YOU CAN--NO--NO--STOP!
THERE IS N-NO F-FREE! THERE IS B-BUT THE WILL OF D-DAGON!
8


AND IT IS ONLY F-FAIR THAT YOU REPLACE THE PIECES YOU V-VANDALIZED. LET ARMAGED-DARAGNADAMMARUNG CONTINUE!
IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT... CHAOS, YOU TAKE THE ONE ON THE RIGHT!
WHAT? HUNH?
CUMULUS! IT'S ABSORBING ME! I'M NOT EQUIPPED FOR THIS!
SORRY, BROTHER, I'M A BIT PREOCCUPIED. WHAT DID YOU SAY?
HELP ME, CUMULUS!!
CAN'T AFFORD TO WASTE TIME ON THIS THING...! ITS SINGLE EYE IS ITS WEAK SPOT!
HANG ON, BROTHER!

YOU'RE TELLING ME! I CAN FEEL ITS DIGESTIVE JUICES CHURNING!
UNNH... THIS IS NO MERE PROTOPLASM!
THERE MIGHTY PRINCE... YOU'RE FREE!
SSKLUNCH!
NOW SHOW YOURSELF, DAGON...AND FACE THE WRATH OF LORD CUMULUS!
I THINK NOT, MY POSTURING FRIEND...
CHESSPIECES DO NOT THREATEN THE PLAYER!
CHAOS... NO!
GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, YOU CRAZY BASTARD!! FIGHT IT!
I-I'M TRYING, BROTHER... BUT HE'S GOT ME-!

INDEED. I'VE G-GOT B-BOTH OF YOU! WATCH HOW M-MY ENERGY WIRES TH-THROW YOU APART...
...AND SLAM YOU T-TOGETHER AGAIN, LIKE THE P-PUPPETS YOU TRULY ARE!
N-NOW, WITH THAT D-DEMONSTRATION OVER...
...LET US RESUME!
ON YOUR FEET, CHAOS...WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
I'VE NO CHOICE...I'M BEING PULLED UP!
WELL, IF WE'RE TO DANCE ON HIS STRINGS, AT LEAST WE'LL GIVE HIM A FIGHT HE WON'T FORGET!
STRINGS? YOU'VE HIT ON IT, CUMULUS!
QUICKLY, CUMULUS... FIRE AT FULL POWER... ABOVE THEIR HEADS!

HURRY... BEFORE DAGON...
O.K! O.K!
IT'S WORKING! YOU'RE CUTTING THE INVISIBLE ENERGY STRANDS BY WHICH HE CONTROLS ALL HIS TOYS! THEY'RE FALLING!
AND... OUR STRINGS ARE CUT, TOO!
12

DESPITE YOUR EVIL WAYS, YOU HAVE PROVEN A WORTHY COMPANION IN BATTLE, PRINCE CHAOS!
YES, WELL, DON'T THANK ME YET, BROTHER.
CUMULUS!
AWRIGHT, HOMBRE ...SLAP LEATHER! I'M A'CALLIN' YOU OUT.
DRAW!
CUMULUS... ZAP HIM BEFORE HE ZAPS ME!
I CAN'T, YOU'LL HAVE TO DODGE HIM TILL I REGAIN MY STRENGTH...
YOU AIN'T CRAWFISHIN' OUT'A THIS 'UN, RANNY!
CUMULUS... WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
...KILLING YOU... I THINK... HOLD ON...

GREAT... HIT HIM IN THE HEAD AND HE BECOMES A COMEDIAN...
NOW LETS JUST HOPE THIS PUPPET'S AS DUMB AS HE LOOKS!
HEY, FOIL-FACE! YOUR MOTHER SWIMS OUT TO TROOP SHIPS!
WHY, YUH MANGY, YELLA BELLIED POLECAT...!
MISSED!
TURN, SIMULACRUM ...TURN AND FIGHT ONE WHO CAN FIGHT BACK!
KZAM!
SKEEK
MIGHTY GOOD SHOOTIN' "PARD'NER"!
14

SCOUNDRELS, YOU'VE C-COST ME MY F-FINEST SET!
IT WILL COST YOU MUCH MORE IF YOU DON'T COME OUT AND TURN OVER THE DOOMS-DAY SWORD!
V-VERY WELL!
OH, MY G-G...!
HE'S ENORMOUS! MY EYES MUST BE PLAYING TRICKS...
IT'S NO TRICK! IT'S NO TRICK!
I AM DAGON S-SUPREME C-COMMANDER OF ALL B-BATTLE! SH-SHOW YOURSELVES AND BE HUMBLED!

ALL RIGHT, BLIMPO. LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN FACE A REAL-LIFE BATTLE...WITH ME!
CUMJLUS, ARE YOU CRAZY? COME BACK HERE!
YOU TH-THINK YOU CAN C-COUNT ON YOUR MENTAL-BLASTS, MIDGET.
B-BUT HE CAN C-CRUSH YOU LIKE A B-BUG!
STOP! YOU MUSTN'T CRUSH ONE WHO BEARS A MESSAGE FROM LUGULBANDA, HE WHO IS KNOWLEDGE!
WELL, D-DAGON IS IMMUNE TO S-SUCH ENERGIES
BAH! WHAT CAN THAT OLD FOOL HAVE T-TO SAY TO M-ME?
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, WILL YOU? UNLESS YOU LEAN CLOSE AND LISTEN...
AND HERE'S THE SCOOP.../
NO! NO! *SKEEK*

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TEEZY!
DAMN IT! THE GYROS ARE ALL MUCKED UP!
C'MON, GUYS — WHAT'S THE MATTER?! C'MON!
I COULD HAVE HELPED IF I'D STAYED ON THE STATION!
UH-UH-NO!
GA-RUNK!

BRIP!
BRUM!
WUMPF!
MORGANA?
TRANG!
MORGANA!
MARS

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– Cat Yronwode
The Comics Buyer's Guide

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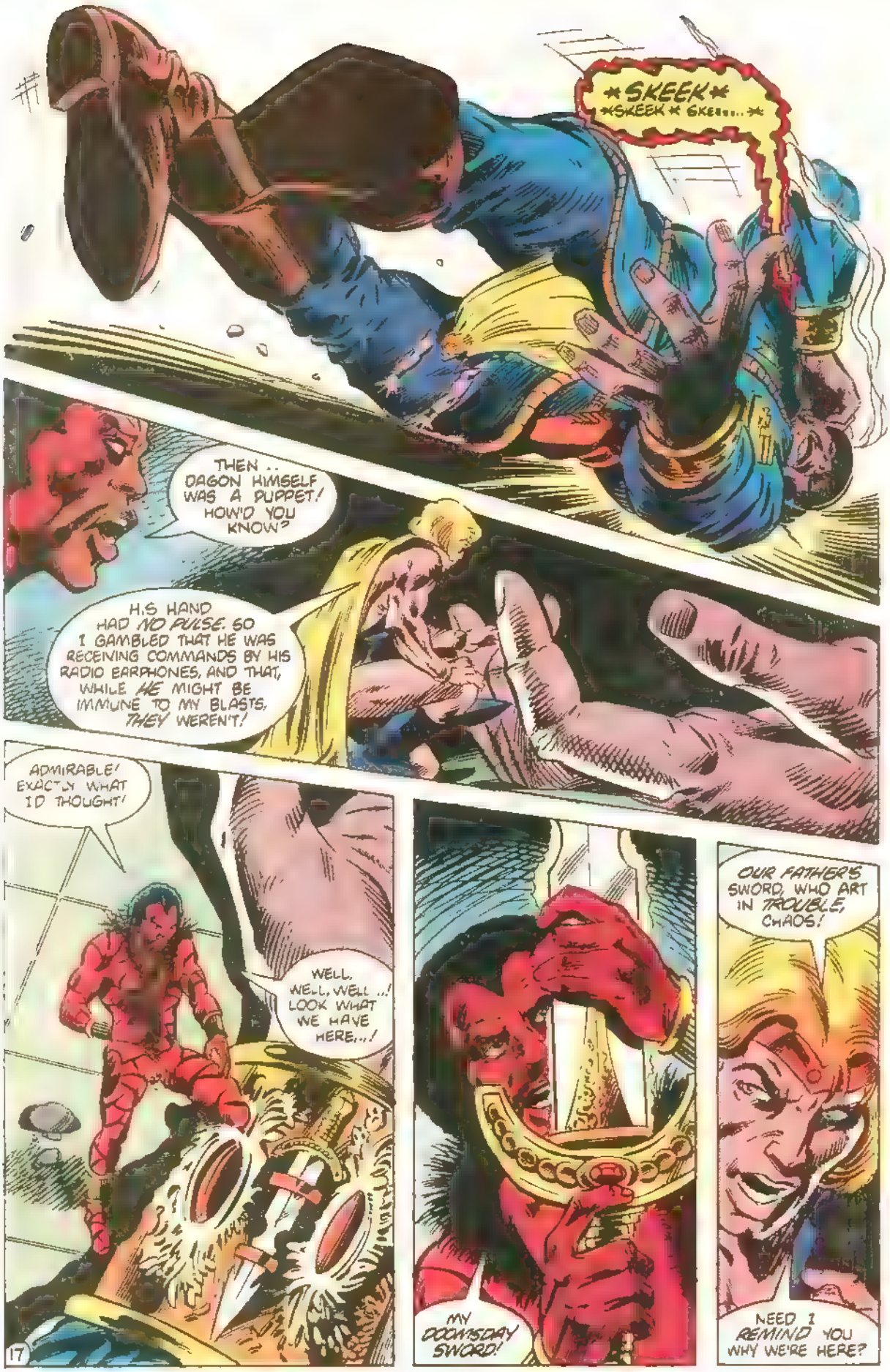
SKEEK
SKEEK SKEE...*
THEN .. DAGON HIMSELF WAS A PUPPET! HOW'D YOU KNOW?
HIS HAND HAD NO PULSE. SO I GAMBLED THAT HE WAS RECEIVING COMMANDS BY HIS RADIO EARPHONES, AND THAT, WHILE HE MIGHT BE IMMUNE TO MY BLASTS, THEY WEREN'T!
ADMIRABLE! EXACTLY WHAT I'D THOUGHT!
WELL, WELL, WELL ..! LOOK WHAT WE HAVE HERE..!
MY DOOMSDAY SWORD!
OUR FATHER'S SWORD, WHO ART IN TROUBLE, CHAOS!
NEED I REMIND YOU WHY WE'RE HERE?

DAGON... HE'S DISAPPEARING...AND SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO THE SKY...
THIS CAN ONLY BE THE WORK OF THE POWER THAT CONTROLLED DAGON...
HE WHOM WE'VE COME HERE TO FACE... THE POWER CALLED...
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH
INFINITY!!
THE SKY ITSELF IS... SHATTERING!
OH, I DO NOT LIKE THIS!
NEXT ISSUE: ALL THE MYRIAD WAYS OF... DOOM!

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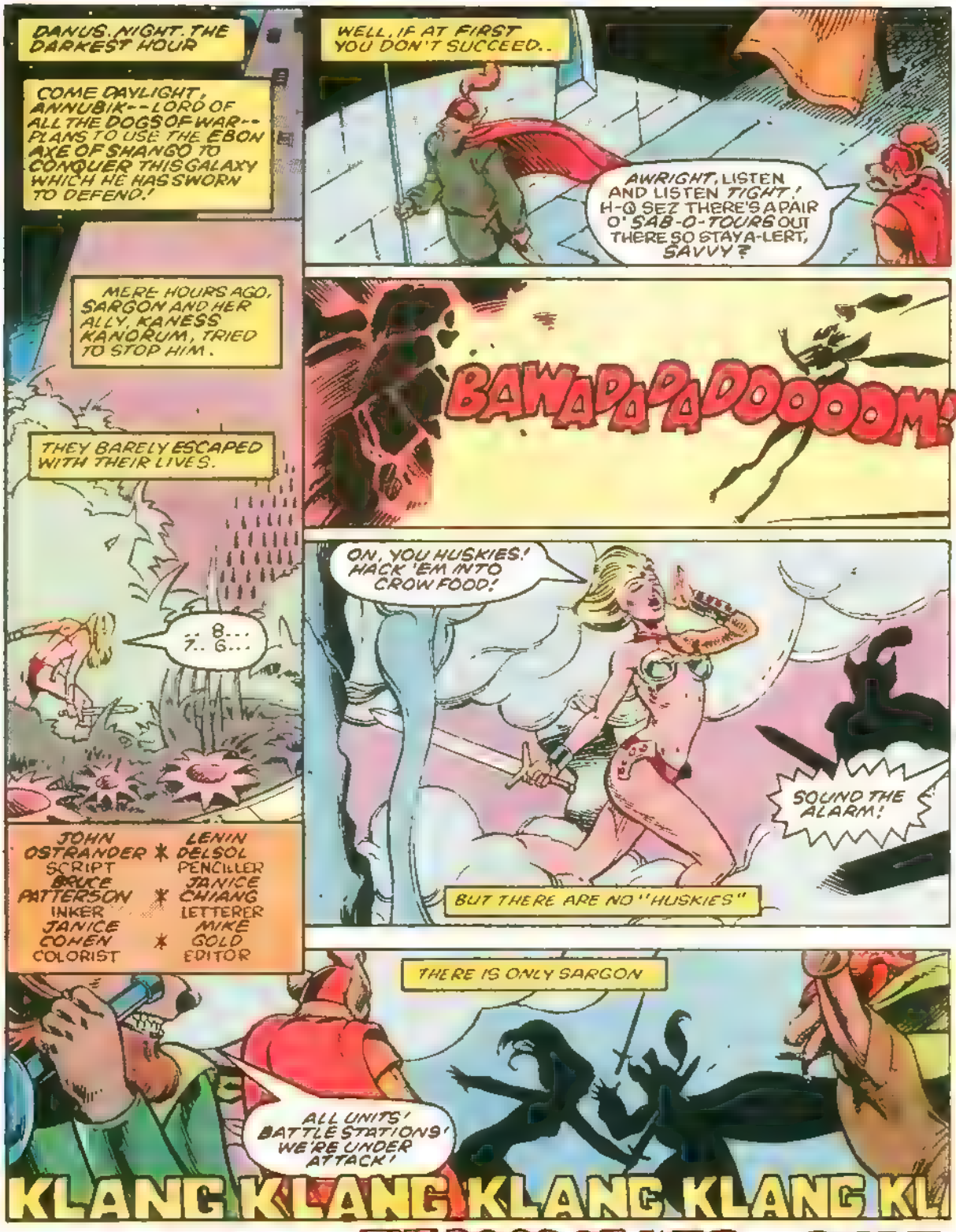

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THE DOGS OF WAR -- PART III

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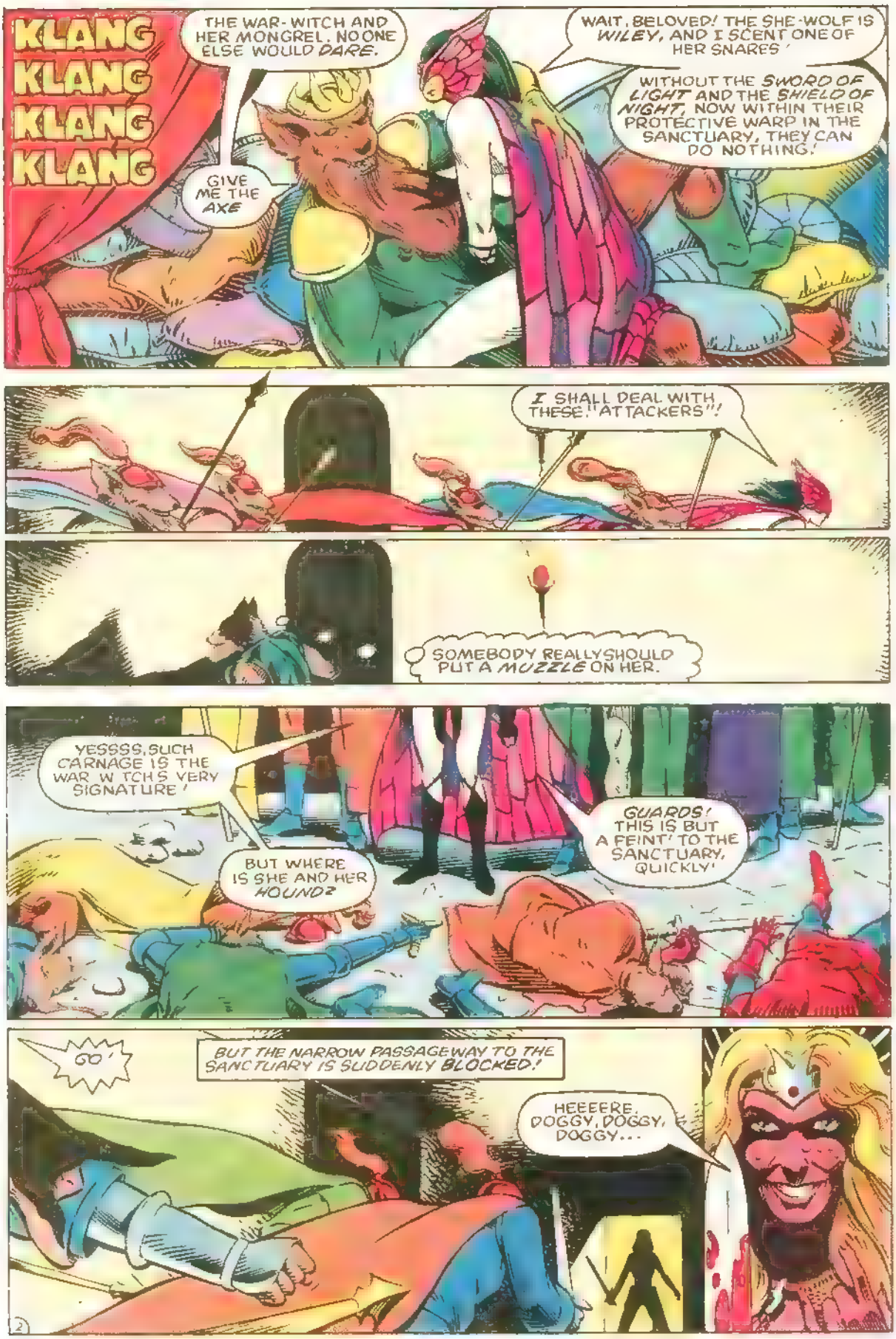
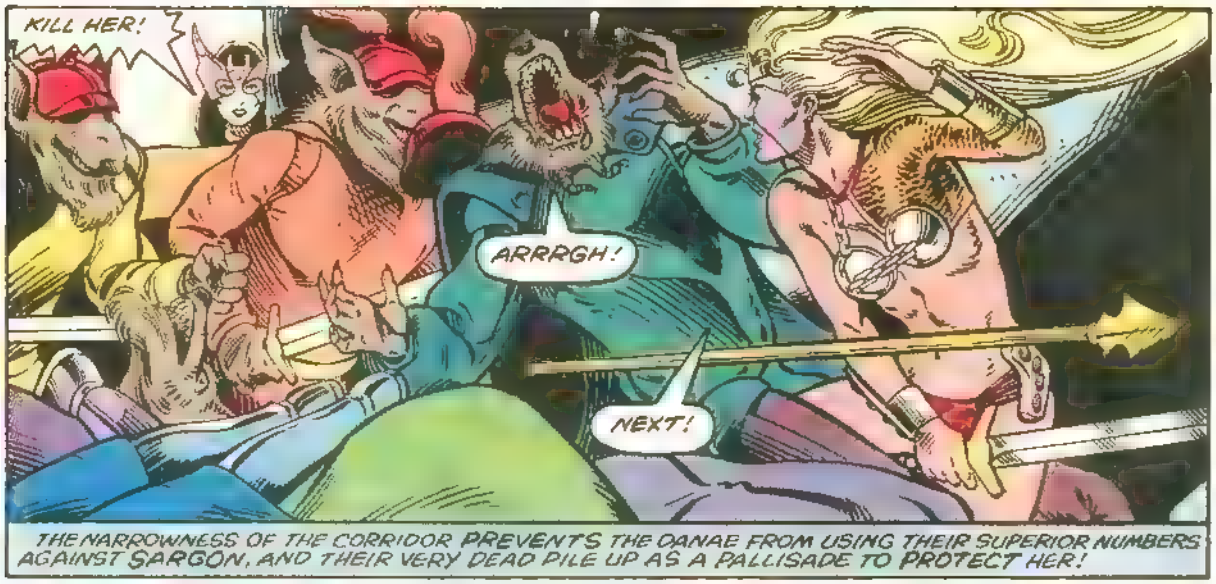
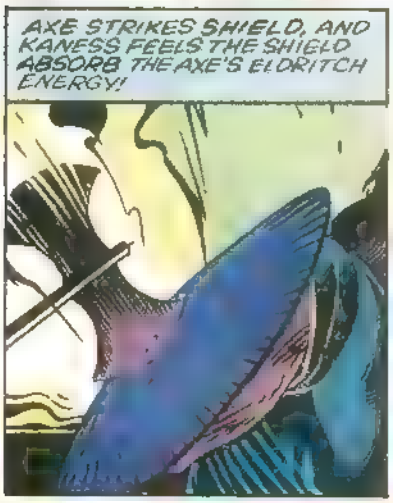

KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
THE WAR-WITCH AND HER MONGREL. NO ONE ELSE WOULD DARE.
GIVE ME THE AXE
WAIT, BELOVED! THE SHE-WOLF IS WILEY, AND I SCENT ONE OF HER SNARES!
WITHOUT THE SWORD OF LIGHT AND THE SHIELD OF NIGHT, NOW WITHIN THEIR PROTECTIVE WARP IN THE SANCTUARY, THEY CAN DO NOTHING!
I SHALL DEAL WITH THESE "ATTACKERS"!
SOMEBODY REALLY SHOULD PUT A MUZZLE ON HER.
YESSSS, SUCH CARNAGE IS THE WAR WITCH'S VERY SIGNATURE!
BUT WHERE IS SHE AND HER HOUND?
GUARDS! THIS IS BUT A FEINT! TO THE SANCTUARY, QUICKLY!
GO!
BUT THE NARROW PASSAGEWAY TO THE SANCTUARY IS SUDDENLY BLOCKED!
HEEEERE, DOGGY, DOGGY, DOGGY...

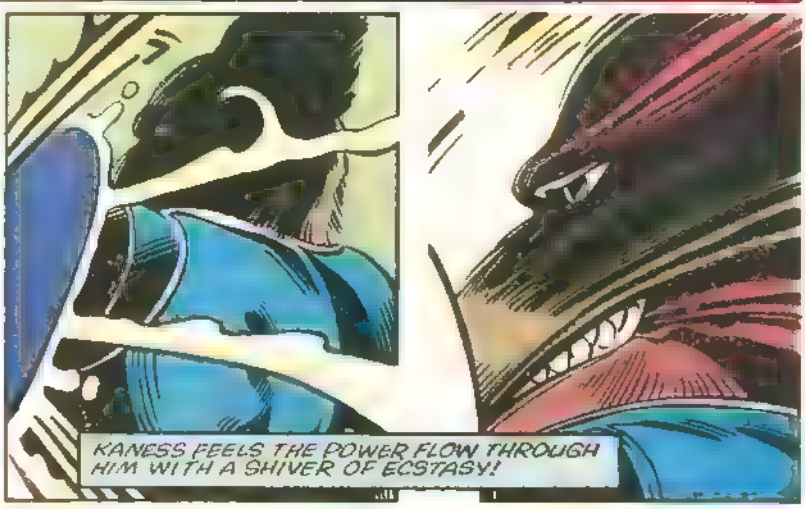
IS THIS IS A SIN, MY GOD?
ALL MY DAYS I HAVE BEEN TAUGHT OBEDIENCE TO MY MASTER, YET I TOOK UP SWORD AND SHIELD TO OPPOSE HIM.
MY HONOR, I SAID,.. THE HONOR OF MY PEOPLE.
AM I NOT THEIR CHAMPION?
SARGON YIELDED UP HER RING TO ADMIT ME PAST THE WARP.
YET, IT IS A SIN TO STRIKE MY KING! WHAT HE'S DONE AND PLANS TO DO IS EVIL -- YES -- BUT DOES HIS SIN EXCUSE MINE?
CAN DOING EVIL UNTO EVIL EVER RENDER GOOD?
FORGIVE ME, SARGON! I CANNOT DO THIS!
TURN, HOUND.
IT IS MY FORGIVENESS YOU SHOULD BEG BEFORE YOU DIE!
CONFRONTED WITH THE BEAST ANNUBIK HAS BECOME, KANESS FINDS DOUBT GIVING WAY TO RESOLVE!
RESOLVE BECOMES ACTION.
AND HONOR BECOMES MORE THAN AN IDEAL.
HONOR BECOMES A DEED.
AND KANESS BECOMES ITS CHAMPION!



THE NARROWNESS OF THE CORRIDOR PREVENTS THE DANAE FROM USING THEIR SUPERIOR NUMBERS AGAINST SARGON, AND THEIR VERY DEAD PILE UP AS A PALLISADE TO PROTECT HER!

AXE STRIKES SHIELD, AND KANESS FEELS THE SHIELD ABSORB THE AXE'S ELDRITCH ENERGY!





KANESS FEELS THE POWER FLOW THROUGH HIM WITH A SHIVER OF ECSTASY!

KANESS FEELS IT EXPLODE WITH FORCE REDOUBLED THROUGH THE SWORD OF LIGHT!

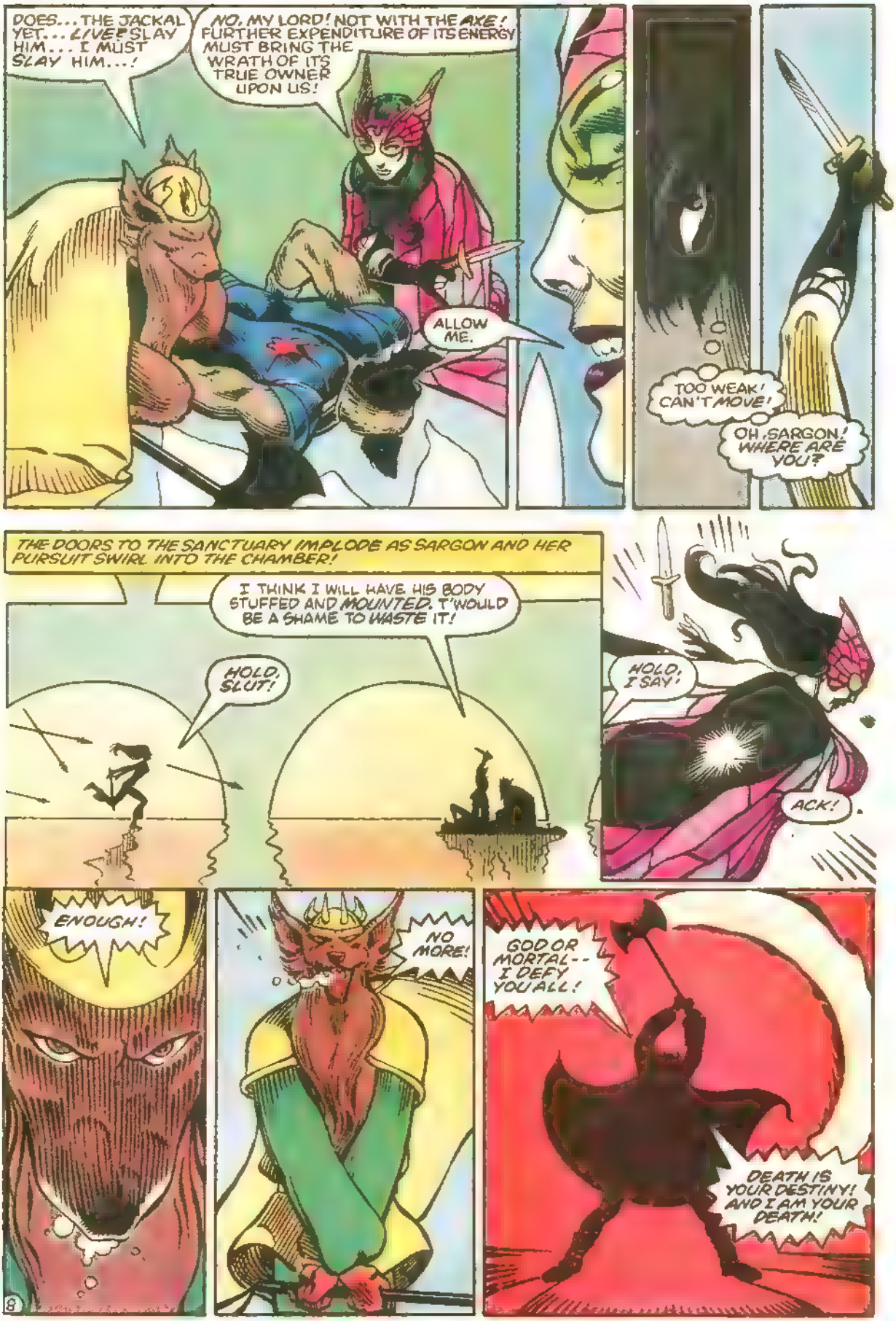
SSSSHA-FWOOOM!

IT'S A GREAT FEELING.

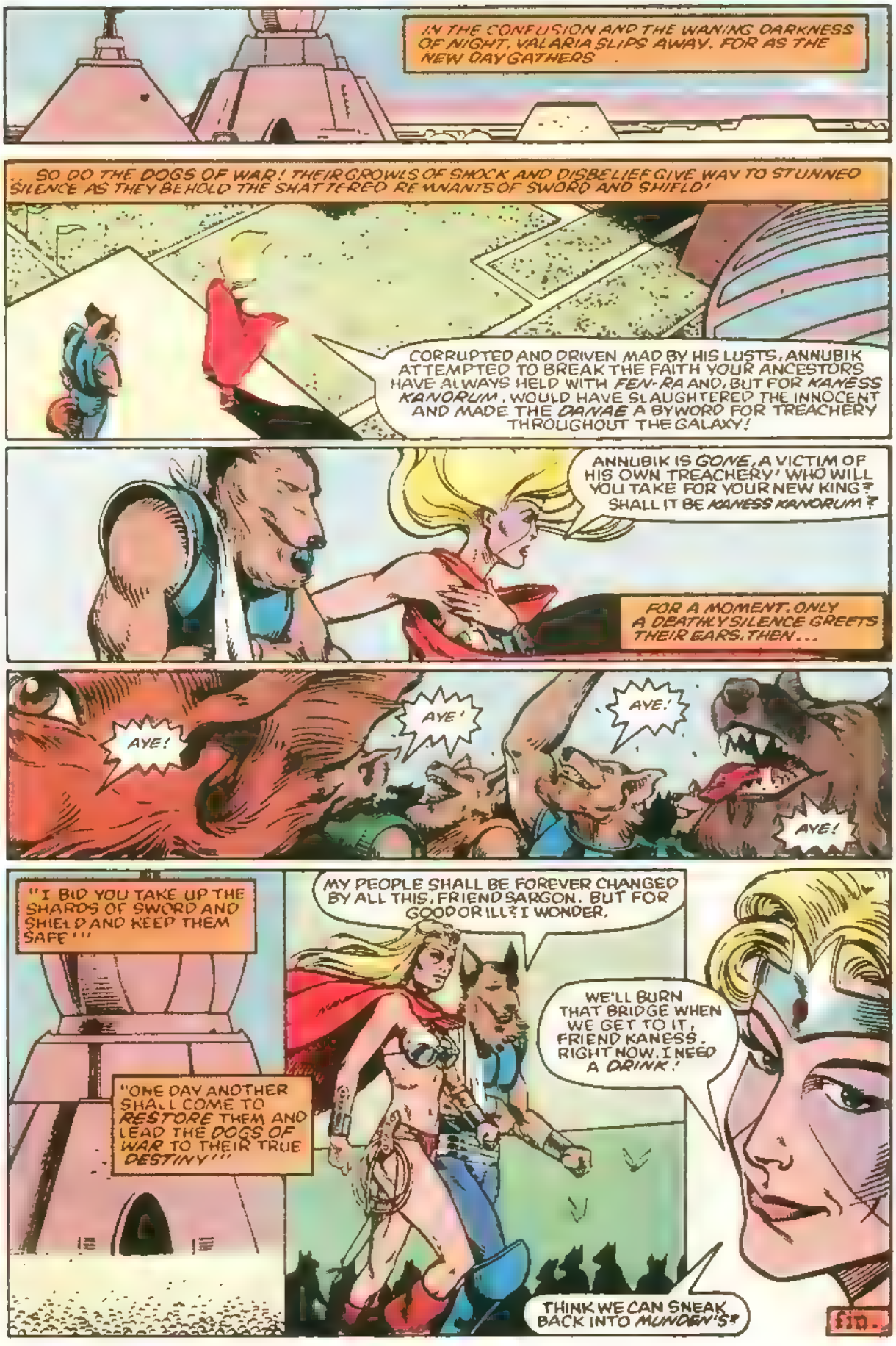
HOW DARE YOU-- HOW DARE YOU-- STRIKE AT ME! I AM YOUR MASTER! DIE, CUR!
FALSE KING, I NAME YOU! DEFILER OF OATH AND TRADITION! TRAITOR TO THE DANAE!
KYYYYYRAK!
WUF! HOLD THE ENERGY IN, OLD BOY... HOLD... HOOOLD!
I AM THE DANAE!
I AM THE STATE, I AM THE LAW! YOU ARE BUT A MOTE OF DUST IN A WINDSTORM!
NOW!
BA-THAMM!
SURRENDER, ANNUBIK! I WILL NOT BE DENIED!
NEVER! I FIGHT FOR DANEAN GLORY!
THE DESPERATE ATTACK DRIVES PAST THE SHIELD AND KANESS INSTINCTIVELY RAISES HIS SWORD!
TI-CHANK!
DISASTER FOLLOWS!
5

HAH! I DEFY FEN-RA AND ITS WEAPONS AND SHALL SLAY ALL WHO WIELD THEM!
WHAM!
I AM THE POWER, MINE IS THE RIGHT, AND MY PEOPLE SHALL FOLLOW ME TO GLORY AND CONQUEST.
WHAM! WHAM! KA-THAM!
YOUR ACCURSED SHIELD MAY STILL ABSORB THE AXE'S FURY, BUT WHAT RELEASE FOR IT HAVE YOU NOW? THE ENERGY CONSUMES YOU FROM WITHIN! CRY OUT, CUR! BEG MY MERCY!
NEVER! THE SHIELD ITSELF SHALL BE MY WEAPON!
URK!
BAMF!
FEROCIOUSLY, RELENTLESSLY, THE GREAT CHAMPION BATTERS HIS FORMER MASTER!
HIS FURY, HIS ANGUISH, GRINDS ANNUBIK INTO THE FLOOR UNTIL, WITH A DESPERATE FLAILING BLOW...
... ANNUBIK CRACKS THE SHIELD...
... LEAVING KANESS WEAPONLESS AGAINST THE EBON AXE!
BUT BEFORE ANNUBIK CAN PRESS HIS ADVANTAGE, KANESS BURIES HIS FANGS IN THE KING'S THROAT... AND ANNUBIK HOWLS!
6

EEEEEEEAOOOOOOOWWWW
THAT SCREAM! IT COMES FROM THE SANCTUARY!
BUT IS IT ANNUBIK WHO HOWLS, OR KANESS?
MIND MEETS MATTER...
KA-CHOOOM!
...AND MATTER EXPLODES!
BUT SARGON HAS BOUGHT BUT SCANT SECONDS OVER HER PURSUERS!
WUURG! WUUUUUURG!
...WUF?
HAVING TROUBLE, M'LORD? HMM?
7


DOES... THE JACKAL YET... LIVE? SLAY HIM... I MUST SLAY HIM...!
NO, MY LORD! NOT WITH THE AXE! FURTHER EXPENDITURE OF ITS ENERGY MUST BRING THE WRATH OF ITS TRUE OWNER UPON US!
ALLOW ME.
TOO WEAK! CAN'T MOVE!
OH, SARGON! WHERE ARE YOU?
THE DOORS TO THE SANCTUARY IMPLODE AS SARGON AND HER PURSUIT SWIRL INTO THE CHAMBER!
I THINK I WILL HAVE HIS BODY STUFFED AND MOUNTED. T'WOULD BE A SHAME TO WASTE IT!
HOLD, SLUT!
HOLD, I SAY!
ACK!
ENOUGH!
NO MORE!
GOD OR MORTAL-- I DEFY YOU ALL!
DEATH IS YOUR DESTINY! AND I AM YOUR DEATH!

AGAIN ELDRITCH ENERGIES FLOW!
AGAIN THE WINDS SHRIEK!
THEY SWEEP UP FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE!
AS BELOW, A MAD MAN OUTSCREAMS THE STORM!
DIE!
DIE!
DOOMED, UNLESS... YES! IF I CAN ONLY TOUCH...
"...THE SWORD AND SHIELD!"
IF I CAN COMBINE MY ENERGIES WITH THE POWER OF THE WEAPONS IT MAY BE ENOUGH!
DIIIIIIIEEEE!
BY THE CRYSTAL!
ENERGIES MEET IN SNARLING DISCORD!
BA BOOOOOOOM!
OF AXE AND WIELDER NO SIGN REMAINS.
WERE THEY DESTROYED BY THE BLAST?
OR HAS SHANGO MERELY RECLAIMED HIS OWN?


IN THE CONFUSION AND THE WANING DARKNESS OF NIGHT, VALARIA SLIPS AWAY. FOR AS THE NEW DAY GATHERS
...SO DO THE DOGS OF WAR! THEIR GROWLS OF SHOCK AND DISBELIEF GIVE WAY TO STUNNED SILENCE AS THEY BEHOLD THE SHATTERED REMNANTS OF SWORD AND SHIELD!
CORRUPTED AND DRIVEN MAD BY HIS LUSTS, ANNUBIK ATTEMPTED TO BREAK THE FAITH YOUR ANCESTORS HAVE ALWAYS HELD WITH FEN-RA AND, BUT FOR KANESS KANORUM, WOULD HAVE SLAUGHTERED THE INNOCENT AND MADE THE DANAE A BYWORD FOR TREACHERY THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY!
ANNUBIK IS GONE, A VICTIM OF HIS OWN TREACHERY! WHO WILL YOU TAKE FOR YOUR NEW KING? SHALL IT BE KANESS KANORUM?
FOR A MOMENT, ONLY A DEATHLY SILENCE GREETS THEIR EARS. THEN...
AYE!
AYE!
AYE!
AYE!
"I BID YOU TAKE UP THE SHARDS OF SWORD AND SHIELD AND KEEP THEM SAFE!"
"ONE DAY ANOTHER SHALL COME TO RESTORE THEM AND LEAD THE DOGS OF WAR TO THEIR TRUE DESTINY!"
MY PEOPLE SHALL BE FOREVER CHANGED BY ALL THIS, FRIEND SARGON. BUT FOR GOOD OR ILL? I WONDER.
WE'LL BURN THAT BRIDGE WHEN WE GET TO IT, FRIEND KANESS. RIGHT NOW, I NEED A DRINK!
THINK WE CAN SNEAK BACK INTO MUNDEN'S?
END.

warped words

%FIRST COMICS, 1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD! If you're one of those types who reads the lettercol before the rest of the issue — or if you happened to miss this month's First Notes pages — boy, have we got news for you.

It seems as though every other letter we receive to Warped Words asks us "When am I going to get the chance to see the Warp plays?" Well, I'm pleased to tell you the Warp plays are back on stage, and fans who live within travelling distance of the great city of Detroit can see Warp *right now* over at The Attic Theater, 525 E. Lafayette, in Detroit.

Bill Norris, the well-respected actor and director who originated the part of Symax in the original productions, is directing the Detroit production — Bill also directed the Minneapolis production a couple of years back. Much of the original Warp material — the Cookie Gluck costumes, the Bill Norris/Richard Fire music, the Rick Paul set, and Lee Ditkowski's amazing special effects — will be used in the Detroit production.

Warp I ("My Battlefield, My Body") will be running through July 9th, Warp II ("Unleashed, Unchained") will be running July 16 through August 27th, and Warp III ("To Die ... Alive") will be running from August 31 through September 10th. All three plays will be running in repertory after September 10th.

Ticket information and such can be had by calling 313-963-7750.

And speaking about the Great Stage ...

Dear Mike,

I am extremely pleased that there is a new comics company which promises to be as great as Marvel and DC and which should give those guys some competition.

In a recent Warped Words column (Warp #4), the subject of the play(s) was brought up. I got to thinking: I'd like very much to see that play, and I was wondering if it would be possible for you to dedicate a section in the comic book to listing when and where the play would be performed. Would it be possible for the Organic Theater Company to go on a sort of tour all over the country? It would be promotional as well as enjoyable. I don't know what's involved, but I just thought that I'd express my thoughts and present some suggestions for possible consideration.

Paul D. Peterson
305 Condon Road
Manistee, MI 49660

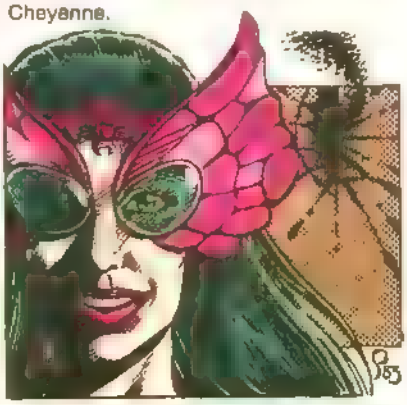
Paul, I sure hope Manistee is within easy reach of Detroit.

To give a plug where a plug is due, The Organic Theater Company is hip-deep in a bona fide hit, and is quite busy trying to find a second theater in which to run its long-delayed next production. Ah, the price of fame!

However, independent theater companies like the Attic Theater will be picking up the ball. And, believe me, Detroit is just the beginning!

Dear Frank and Peter,

This little ol' country boy hasn't never seen this here critter known as Warp. Sure, he's seen subtle hints in your Distinguished Competition's magazines, and he's done his best to find out more about it. Thanks for having the courage to publish it in comics form — I doubt the stage production would ever come to Cheyenne.



Frank, your art is all that it ever was. Crisp, concise, and in the case of Valaria, just as seductive as ever. If this comic holds true, then we're in for quite a show. Are there any plans to showcase the original art created for Warp by Neal Adams?

Another question: how true to the plays is the dialogue? As an amateur artist, writer, and playwright, I'd be interested in seeing one or two pages of the original script.

Over all, I can't help but feel that First Comics in general, and Warp in particular, are headed in the right direction. Good storytelling and art help to put a comic on my "must buy" list ... Warp is one of the first on my revised list. Keep up the good work.

Finally, I can't help but comment: the back-up feature. Ditko art? He has never been one of my favorites, but for some reason, he seemed to do an above average job. Thank him for me. Now how about a Valaria back-up?

Good job, gentlemen, and a good comic. Let's keep it that way.

Charles B. Cockett, Jr.
353 McComb Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82007

Subtle hints in our Distinguished Competition's magazines? We must have missed 'em.

Don't be too certain the Warp plays will never hit Cheyenne. As noted above (and in First Notes), the Warp plays are back on the great stage, this time in Detroit. And negotiations are underway for future productions — or so Warp producer (and First Comics publisher) Rick Obadiah so informs me.

Reprinting Neal's artwork is something that had crossed our minds. At one time, we almost ran it as a three-part back-up series, but we thought better of the idea, preferring to run stories that were never before seen by anyone. But if enough people want it, we might run the stuff as a **Warp Special.**

Our adaptation is relatively faithful to the Warp plays: there are some holes in the script that are to be covered by the stage performers, others that are part of the structure of a three-part play. We've had to fill in those holes while forming the story into a multi-part comics format, and that isn't quite the same as doing a play.

To answer your question: some of the dialogue in our adaptation is straight from the play, and all of it is in the spirit of the play.

Speaking about a Valaria back-up (this response is running just about as long as your letter) — it just so happens we have a two-part Valaria story scheduled for issues eight and nine. Peter Gillis will be writing, Bill Willingham will be pencilling, and Bruce Patterson will be inking.

And if the name Bill Willingham is new to you, then obviously you aren't a role playing games fan — Bill's one of the top-ranked artists in the field!

Dear Frank,

Well, Warp #4 settled it for me — in my mind, the high quality present in the earlier issues certainly was no fluke! Brunner's artwork was consistently beautiful, he is truly skilled in conveying the emotions of his drawings via their expressions and body positions.

I found the script to be refreshing, it's nice to read a title that is free of the comics code stamp! The characterizations are progressing quite nicely. I eagerly await more Sargon tales!

Thank you, First, for letting those of us who had not known of Warp's existence in on the action. But for your magazine I

would have remained in ignorance for who knows how long? Now, I am looking forward to someday attending a live performance.

A parting question: Do you intend to keep all of your titles free of the Comics Code mark?

Candace Young
328 Northbank Ct. #4
University of the Pacific
Stockton, CA 95207

Candace, back when I was a little boy, I was taught that freedom from censorship was one of the most important things that make the United States better than certain other nations. Oddly enough, this was just a year or two after the Code was imposed on the comics medium.

You can see why I've always thought there was something completely unAmerican about the Comics Code Authority. I still feel that way.

The surviving publishers who did so much to ram the Code down the other publishers' throats nearly thirty years ago are, today, all publishing comics without the Code seal (I'm talking about Archie, DC and Marvel); so perhaps they recognize it has outlived its usefulness.

Then again, what some people have been getting past the Code these days is stuff we aren't interested in putting in our books: If we're tempted to run a possibly objectionable word, we won't print it in Spanish or Yiddish — we'll do it in English. And we have strict limits on the number of dead babies in our line during any given month.

See, we're just as sanctimonious as the next bunch.

Folks,

The aspect of Warp #4 that interested me the most was Chaos's dialogue. He does not seem the ultimate villain that I thought. It is still too early to decide what he is, or is supposed to be, but I'm hoping the Warp Special will answer the questions.

Speaking of the Warp Special, it is nice to see a special edition that does not burst ones bankroll. But to place it between two issues of a monthly comic and interrupt a two parter?

Mike Sopp
438 W. 32
Erie, PA 16508

Actually, we structured the first **Warp Special** *so that it would not interrupt the monthly flow of either consecutive three-part back-up series (The Faceless Ones and the Sargon: Dogs of War stories). The actual multi-part* **Warp** *adaptation — which ends in two issues, by the way — is viewed here as such; we didn't see issues 4 and 5 as a two-part story.*

Besides which, we don't think the world is ready for two **Warp** *books during any given month. At least, not yet.*

As you can see, Chaos — Prince of Madness is a lot more than he seems. Indeed, the origin story told in the **Warp Special** *might not even be the real origin story ... or the only origin story. Stay tuned.*

NEXT MONTH: The home stretch, as Cumulus and Chaos take on the ultimate menace — Infinity! **Frank Brunner, Peter Gillis** and **Mike Gustovich** continue the adaptation ... as **Gillis, Bill Willingham** and **Bruce Patterson** begin a two-part Valaria saga set before the initial **Warp** stories. Cover, as usual, by Brunner. If we don't see you in Detroit, we'll see you right here next month!

— Mike Gold

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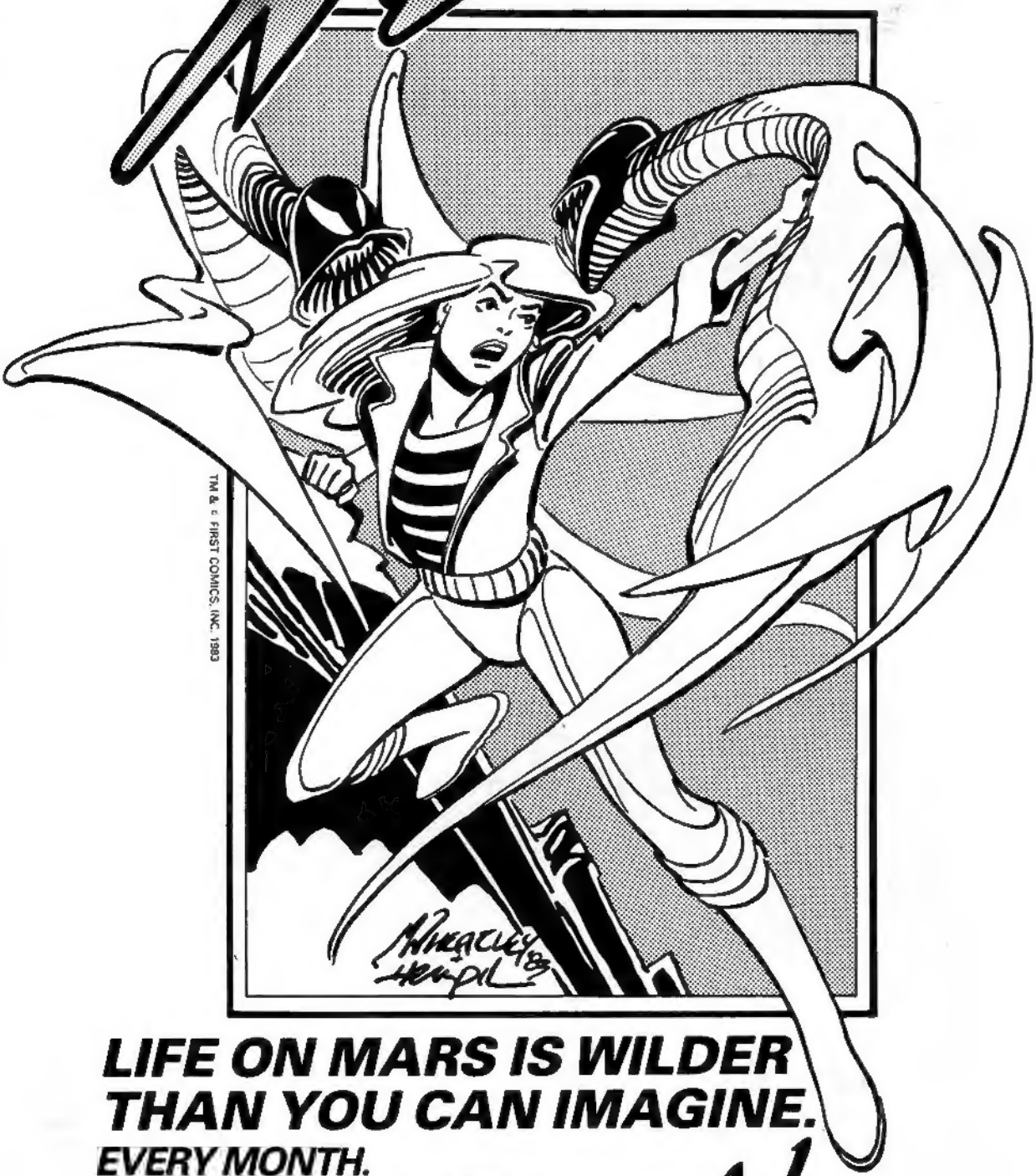

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